

C.I.A. Chief Wary of Pakistani Nuclear Program

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WASHINGTON, May 18 — William H. Webster, the Director of Central Intelligence, told Congress today that Pakistan was "engaged in developing a nuclear capability" while its rival India had begun research that could be used to make thermonuclear weapons.

Mr. Webster's statements, shortly before a visit to Washington by Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto of Pakistan, appeared to be an effort by the Bush Administration to underscore its concern about Pakistan's nuclear research program.

A Senate aide said the questions and

answers on the issue had been coordinated with the Central Intelligence Agency before Mr. Webster's appearance before the Senate Governmental Affairs Committee. It was the first time Mr. Webster had publicly addressed an issue that has long worried American intelligence analysts and foreign policy officials.

By law, for Pakistan to continue to receive American aid, the President must certify to Congress annually that Pakistan does not possess a nuclear explosive device. Last November, President Reagan told lawmakers that while Pakistan had not yet built a bomb he was "extremely troubled" by the pros-

pect of a nuclear arms race in the subcontinent.

Representative Stephen J. Solarz, a Brooklyn Democrat, said Pakistan was informed that if it did not redirect its nuclear program, the President would be unable to make the appropriate certification to Congress this year. Mr. Solarz said he recently heard from a senior American official that the Pakistanis were responding, "The implication of this testimony," he said, "is that they haven't," Mr. Solarz said.

India detonated a basic atomic device in 1974, but experts say its pursuit of a more sophisticated thermonuclear weapon, the so-called hydrogen bomb,

began only recently. At the same time, Pakistan's development of a nuclear bomb has been the subject of high-level concern in the United States since the 1970's.

In his testimony, Mr. Webster also made these points:

¶ Argentina has been selling nuclear technology to Iran, Egypt and Saudi Arabia and has been assisting Iraq in development of the Condor II ballistic missile.

¶ North Korea has begun manufacturing Soviet-designed Scud B ballistic missiles. The 1950's technology was used by Iran and Iraq to devastating effect during the so-called "war of the cities" in which the two nations traded missile attacks on their capitals before a cease-fire last year.

¶ China is "actively promoting" the export of shorter range ballistic mis-

siles with "a mix of financial and political objectives" motivating the sales.

Mr. Webster told the Senate committee that India had been seeking to separate and purify an isotope called lithium-6, and he called this an "indication of interest" in thermonuclear devices. He added that the missile and atomic research programs of India and Pakistan have "all the earmarks of a race."

Problems for the U.S.

"Clearly Pakistan is engaged in developing a nuclear capability," Mr. Webster said. "What creates problems for the United States is whether that capability has reached a point that it implicates the various amendments that apply to other assistance and relief for Pakistan."

Pakistan is receiving \$576 million in economic and military aid this year

from the United States, and the Bush Administration has asked for \$621 million in the coming fiscal year.

Mr. Webster's remarks on Pakistan brought a sharp rejoinder from Senator John Glenn, the Ohio Democrat who is chairman of the Governmental Affairs Committee. Senator Glenn asserted that Pakistan's nuclear activities were already sufficient to prompt a cutoff in aid, but that the United States had overlooked the violations because it had such other interests in Pakistan as support for the Afghan guerrillas.

"We don't seem to be willing to do anything about this," the senator said. "We're not willing to put teeth into it. The law is very clear on what should be done, and yet we always make some excuse and overlook it somehow."